



How Do They Compare? Child Nutrition Programs' Meal Pattern Requirements

Please note: This chart only addresses meals served to children age 1 year and older as well as adults. It does not address the infant meal pattern requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) (jointly referred to as School Meal Programs). Additionally, the chart is based on the updated Child and Adult Care Food Program meal patterns and the updated pre-school meal patterns in the School Meal Programs. These updated requirements go into effect October 1, 2017.

Meal Pattern Requirements

Meal Pattern Requirements	Child and Adult Care Food Program (and Schools' pre-k meal patterns)	School Meal Programs (NSLP and SBP)	K-12 Afterschool Snack (under NSLP)
Fat Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 year olds: Whole milk 2 year olds and older: low-fat or fat-free milk Adults Only: Yogurt may be served in place of milk once per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-fat or fat-free Yogurt may be served and credited as a meat/meat alternative 	Low-fat or fat-free
Flavored milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibited for children 0 through 5 years old Must be fat-free when served to children 6 years old and older and adults 	Low-fat or fat-free	Fat-free
Non-dairy beverages (Fluid Milk Substitutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent (defined by regulation) to cow's milk may be served to participants with special dietary needs; must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian, adult participant, or a person on behalf of the adult participant Breastmilk may be served in lieu of fluid milk; a written request is not required Other beverages, including water, may not be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable meal or snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent (defined by regulation) to cow's milk may be served to non-disabled students with medical or special dietary needs; must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian Other beverages, including water, may not be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable meal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent (defined by regulation) to cow's milk may be served to non-disabled students with medical or special dietary needs; must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian Other beverages, including water, may not be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable snack



Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetables and fruit are one component at breakfast • Vegetables and fruits are two separate components at lunch, supper, and snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the fruit component is required at breakfast; vegetables may be offered in place of fruits as long as 2 cups/week of under consumed vegetables (dark green, red/orange, beans and peas, or other vegetables) are included on the weekly breakfast menu • Vegetables and fruits are two separate components at lunch 	Vegetables and fruit are one component
Vegetable Subgroups	No requirement	Must offer specific serving amount of each vegetable subgroup (dark green vegetables, red-orange vegetables, beans and peas, starchy vegetables, other vegetables) over the course of a week (NSLP only)	No requirement
Full-strength juice (100% juice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May count towards the entire vegetable or fruit component no more than once per day • Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component 	May count towards no more than half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the vegetables or fruits offered over the week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May count towards the entire vegetable/fruit component • Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component
Crediting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried fruit credit as twice the amount served ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried fruit = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit) • Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount served (1 cup of raw leafy greens = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried fruit credit as twice the amount offered ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried fruit = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit) • Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount offered (1 cup of raw leafy greens = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable) 	All fruits and vegetables are credited based on volume served with the exception of tomato paste and tomato puree which credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs
Whole Grain-Rich	Must serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day	All grains offered must be whole grain-rich (exemptions allowed through waiver request)	No whole grain-rich requirement
Grain-based desserts	Grain-based desserts cannot count toward the grain requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2 ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts per week may be offered as part of the grains component at lunch • No restrictions at breakfast 	Sweet snack foods should not be served more than twice a week
Breakfast Cereals	Must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce	No sugar limit – the cap is generated by the dietary specifications for the weekly menu	No sugar limit



Crediting	Based on ounce equivalents (starting October 1, 2019)	Based on ounce equivalents Non-creditable grains (e.g. bran, germ, etc.) are limited to no more than 2% or less than 0.25 ounce equivalents per portion	Based on ounce equivalents
Tofu	Allowed as a meat alternate. Must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight)	Allowed as a meat alternate. Must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight)	Allowed as a meat alternate. Must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight)
Yogurt (including soy yogurt)	Must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces	No sugar limit per product – the cap is generated by the dietary specifications for the weekly menu	No sugar limit
Meat/meat alternates in place of grains <u>at breakfast</u>	May substitute meat/meat alternate for the entire grain component no more than 3 times per week	May substitute 1 ounce equivalent meat/meat alternate for 1 ounce equivalent grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met, or it may be served as an extra within the dietary specifications for the weekly menu	Not applicable
Dietary specifications	Sugar limits on breakfast cereals and yogurt (see above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meals must, on average, meet weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium • Food products served in meals must contain zero grams of trans fat 	No dietary specifications